

Physical Activity: A Key to Wellness and Successful Aging



SECTION ON GERIATRICS

Health Promotion & Wellness Special Interest Group American Physical Therapy Association

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Wellness

A lifelong interactive process of becoming aware of and practicing healthy choices to create a more successful and balanced lifestyle.



Benefits of Physical Activity

- Helps maintain independence
- Improves quality of life
- Improves health
- Increases energy



Physical Activity Improves Physical Function by:

- Improving balance and reducing risk of falls
- Keeping bones and muscles strong
- Improving endurance
- Helping to maintain a healthy weight
- Improving sleep
- Helping to regulate blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar



Physical Activity Improves Intellectual Function by:

- Helping maintain cognitive function (e.g. memory and concentration)
- Decreasing stress and anxiety
- Improving mood
- Reducing depression



Physical Activity Improves Social Function by:

- Increasing independence
- Creating a stimulating, and often supportive, environment
- Improving family time
- Increasing social networks and involvement

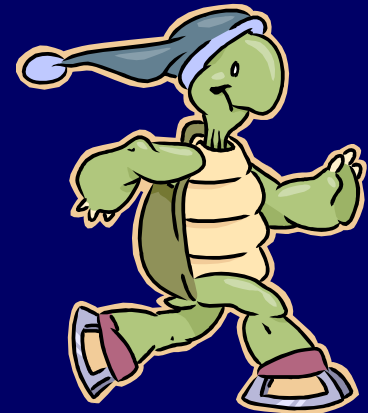


Physical Activity



Getting Started

- Check with your doctor
- Visit a physical therapist
- Start slowly
- Integrate different physical activity components into your life
- Choose activities you enjoy
- Get a buddy



How Do I Choose an Activity?

- Consider including multiple components
- Enjoyable
- Accessible
- Convenient
- Variety



Meeting Your Needs

- Considerations for group programs:
 - Class size
 - Instructor experience
 - Amount of assistance you need
 - Intensity and variety of program



Physical Activity May Include

- Walking
- Swimming or participating in a water exercise class
- Playing a sport you enjoy



Physical Activity May Include



- Lifting weights or exercising with elastic bands
- Taking a tai chi or senior yoga class
- Dancing
- Joining a local senior exercise class

What If I Have Physical Limitations?

- Choose an activity that accommodates your abilities
 - Use something sturdy for support
 - Use a cane or walker during activities
 - Exercise sitting
- Consult a physical therapist to help you choose an activity

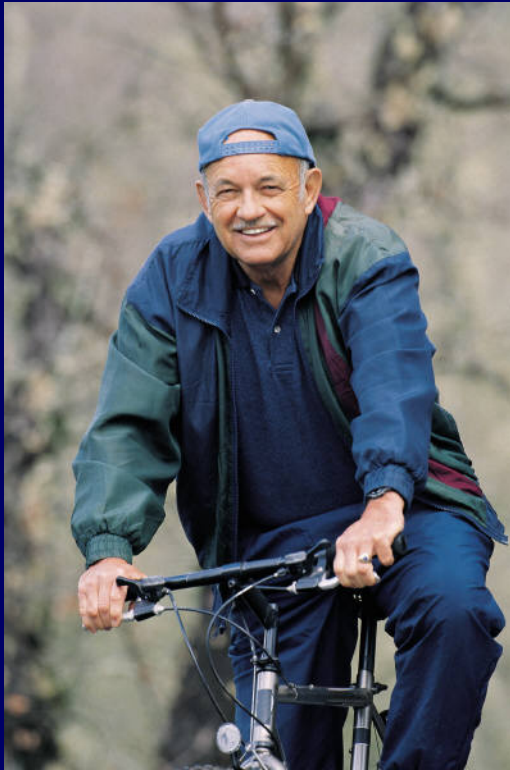


How Do I Begin a Physical Activity Session?

Warm up for 10 minutes



How Much Time Do I Need to be Active For?



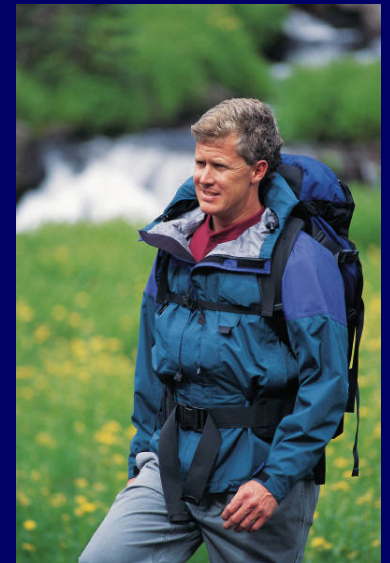
Warm-up should be followed by at least 30 minutes of effortful physical activity.



How Much Time Do I Need to be Active For?

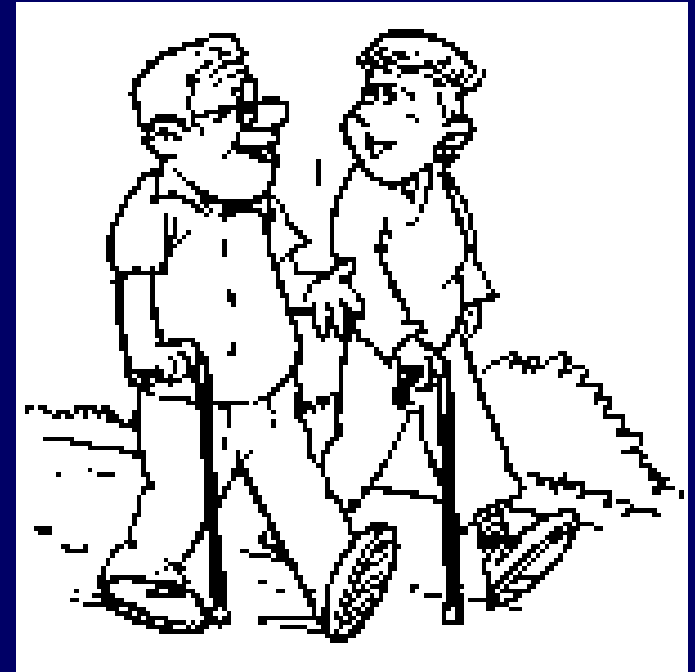


- 30 - 60 minutes a day of endurance, strengthening, balance and flexibility activities



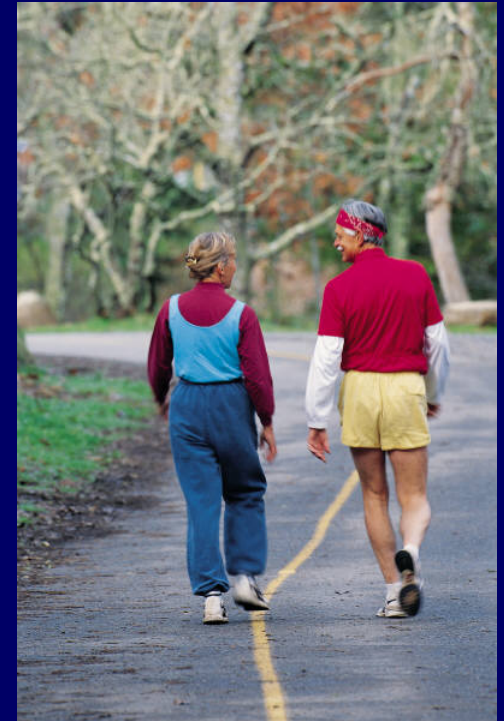
How Much Effort is Needed?

- Begin slowly and pace yourself.
- You should be able to carry on a conversation during the activity.

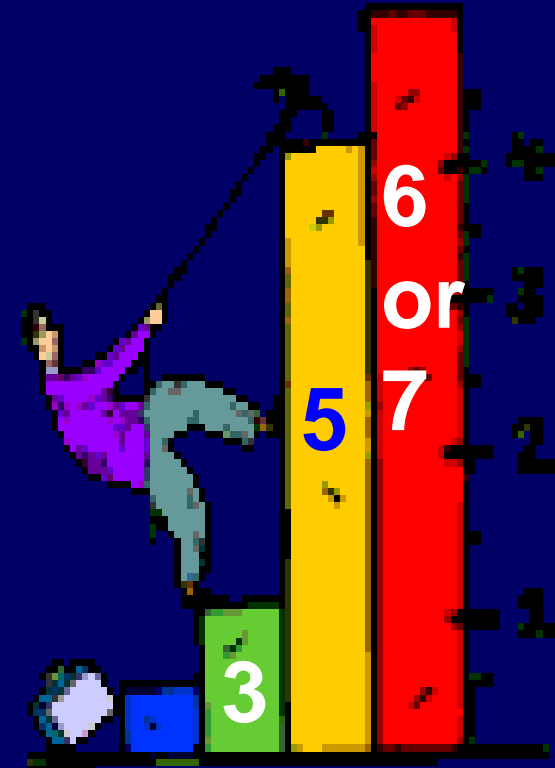


How Do I Finish a Physical Activity?

Finish your session with a 10 minute cool down and a tall glass of water.



How Many Days A Week Should I Be Active?

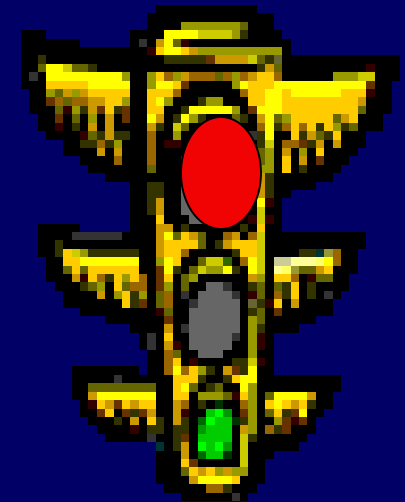


How might I expect to feel?

- When you first begin a physical activity program or advance your current activities it is normal to feel:
 - Mild muscle stiffness, burning, or fatigue that decreases in 24 hours
 - Mild increase in heart rate with continued activity, but that returns to normal in 5 minutes

Stop to Rest if You Experience

- Shortness of breath
(can't complete sentence)
- Dizziness
- Heart rate that exceeds prescribed target rate
- Onset or worsening of pain



What Does Progress Look Like?

- Minor improvement in 2-3 weeks
- Significant improvement in 2-3 months

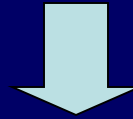


Getting Back on Track

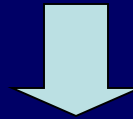


- Illness
- Vacation
- Injury

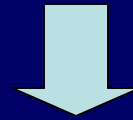
10% per week missed



Effort



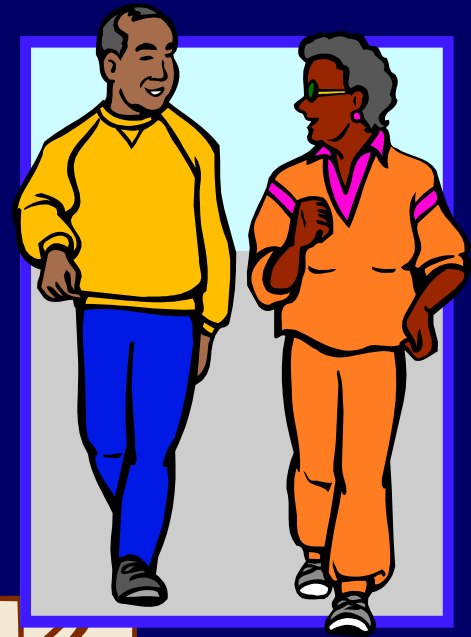
Speed



Distance

Lifetime Goals: Maintaining Fitness Level

- Be realistic
- Be consistent
- Find a buddy
- Journal / chart progress



Thank You!

